

## NYC expands smoking ban to include e-cigarettes

December 20 2013, by Jake Pearson

---



In this Feb. 10, 2013 file photo made with multiple flash exposures, a model pulls on an electronic cigarette backstage before the Chado Ralph Rucci fashion show in New York. New York City is considering legislation that would include electronic cigarettes in the city's ban on smoking in bars, restaurants and other indoor public spaces. (AP Photo/John Minchillo, File)

New Yorkers who turned to electronic cigarettes to keep smoking in restaurants, offices or even libraries are down to their last few puffs in such places.

The City Council's voted 43-8 Thursday to include e-[cigarettes](#) in the ban on [smoking](#) in public indoor places. Outgoing Mayor Michael Bloomberg is expected to sign the measure. The ban would then take effect in four months.

Council Speaker Christine Quinn said before the vote on e-[cigarettes](#) that the evidence on whether nicotine inhalers are truly safe is insufficient. She said allowing the devices in places where cigarettes are now banned also could "renormalize" [smoking](#) and undermine the public perception that the habit is now acceptable only in the privacy of one's own home.

"We don't want a step backward with that," she said.

The vote came amid sharp disagreement within public health circles over how to treat e-cigarettes. The tobacco-free smokes heat up a chemical solution and emit vapors while giving smokers their nicotine fix.

Manufacturers say the mist is harmless, and most scientists agree that regular smokers who switch to e-cigarettes are lowering their health risk substantially.

The devices, though, aren't heavily regulated. And experts say consumers can't yet be sure whether they are safe either for users or people exposed to second-hand vapor puffs.

Like regular cigarettes, the nicotine in e-cigarettes is also highly addictive. People who use them may be unable to quit, even if they want to. That has raised concerns that a new generation of young people could gravitate toward e-cigarettes and wind up hooked for life or even switch to [tobacco cigarettes](#).

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has said it intends to regulate e-

cigarettes as tobacco products but has yet to issue any rules, leaving manufacturers free to advertise while regular cigarette ads are banned.

Several states, including New Jersey, Arkansas, Utah and North Dakota, have already expanded their indoor smoking bans to include [e-cigarettes](#). Other bans have been proposed in several big cities. About half of the states restrict sales to minors.

The American Lung Association and the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids supported expanding New York City's ban on to [e-cigarettes](#). Other public health advocates did not. They said that in a nation where roughly 1 in 5 adults are hooked on indisputably deadly cigarettes, safer alternatives should be embraced, not discouraged, even if science hasn't rendered a final verdict.

E-cigarette manufacturers say they don't believe their products will be used as a gateway drug to cigarettes, and they have criticized New York's proposed ban as a rush to judgment.

"Companies like us want to be responsible, but when you have municipalities prematurely judge what should be and what shouldn't be, based not on the science, I think it does the public a disservice," said Miguel Martin, president of e-cigarette brand Logic.

© 2013 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

Citation: NYC expands smoking ban to include e-cigarettes (2013, December 20) retrieved 23 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-12-nyc-e-cigarettes.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--